

# A SERVANT GIRL LIFTS THE DEBT FROM A CHURCH



"Queer, queer, that anything like this should cause so much talk." "People are good on the whole, sir." "Render unto God that which is God's."

"Let the Church Take It." "Jesus Himself knew no distinction." "Any of give"

## Jane Jones Gives \$30,000, All the Savings of Her Life of Toil, to the Master.

JANE JONES, spinster, became famous in a day last week. Desiring to walk in the footsteps of the Master, she laid her entire fortune on the altar of God, leaving herself in her old age without support. And it was a goodly fortune, some \$30,000, and every dollar earned by hard work. For Jane Jones has been all her life a servant—a plain, old-fashioned soul, of a kind supposed to exist these days only in books. She loves the people whom she has served, and they respect her. She found her lowly calling full of opportunities to work out a useful and honorable life. She scorns the modern idea that doing housework for others is degrading.

The money she surrendered, or sought to surrender, she looks upon simply as a return to God of what was given her in trust. It was saved penny by penny, this money, out of her wages and the wages of her sister, also a servant. Filled with a fine religious zeal from her childhood, she saw nothing remarkable in the sacrifice offered. That others should see anything of the kind fills her with surprise. The commotion caused by her act she fails utterly to understand.

"What is it you find to wonder at in this?" she asked in amazement, when the people came in swarms to shake her hand. "I have but given back to God what He in His goodness gave me for my use here."

"What is there in that to cause surprise?"

That is Jane Jones, the unworldly.

The church people made difficulties about accepting the gift she offered. She persisted and was at first not able to comprehend the objection. To her mind the affair was very simple and a matter of course. She and her sister Mary had saved the money. The sister died. The church they belonged to, the Park Avenue Methodist Church, at Eighty-sixth street and Park Avenue, was in debt. The fortune she had was just about sufficient to lift this debt, and so she offered it outright to the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Albert D. Vall.

"I am fifty-eight years old," she said; my wants are few. The income from my property is more than I need. Let the church take it. If you think best I will take enough of the income through the church to support me in my humble way. If the church needs it all I am still strong enough to work as I have in the past. Any of my old mistresses will give me employment. Of that I am sure."

Dr. Vall was speechless. He has been many years in the ministry. He has seen many acts of self-sacrifice. Out of his own scanty store he has himself given freely over and over again. But the offer of this simple yet strong old sewing woman overwhelmed him completely. It was her all she desired to give up for the church, and represented more than millions would represent to some others. He was profoundly touched, but resolute in protecting the old lady against her own freehandedness.

"Never," he said, after recovering control of himself, "will I consent that you leave yourself bare. You live a good, wholesome, useful life; you help others with what you have, and it would be wrong to take what you offer."

Jane Jones was not to be shaken in her desires. She persisted in her offer. She would not take no for an answer. The money should and must go to the church to lift the debt. So a compromise was effected. The minister agreed that the old lady might make over her property to the church, but only on condition that she was to retain a life interest in it. The net income while she lived was to be hers to do with as she pleased.

Reluctantly Jane Jones gave in, and so it is to-day.

"Queer, queer, now," she said, "that anything like that should cause so much talk. What have I done that any Christian person would not have done in my place?"

"A great deal," it was suggested. "You gave up everything that was yours."

"That was mine?" she exclaimed, almost fiercely. "Mine? No, sir! No, sir! Not mine. It was the Lord's, and I only did my duty, when I would have given it to Him. What right had I to it, when it was needed in His work. Render unto God that which is God's. You remember what the great Book says? Render unto God. That is all I have done."

The old lady made a fine picture as she gave utterance to this simple sentence. Her hair, snow white and scanty, was brushed back straight from her forehead. Her hands, big, strong, red hands, giving evidence of her years of toil, were thrown outward with a depressing gesture. Her face, round and large, showing, as did the hands, the scars of work, was aglow with enthusiasm.

There is little of the spiritual about Jane Jones. Born of working people in the Welsh mountains, she began almost as a baby to labor, and only in recent years has she known anything like leisure. Under such a course her body grew strong, and great and robust. Her figure is large and well covered with flesh. Her walk is ungraceful, but firm. Altogether she suggests toil and little else until her intense religious belief or her love for those whom she has served moves her. Then she becomes almost magnetic.

It is easy at such moments to understand why she was willing to give up everything, firm in the conviction that the "Lord will provide," as she says. The coarse, stout figure, in the plain black gown, that nowhere shows signs of ornaments or trimming, grows fairly humorous. Every fibre of the woman's nature vibrates with intense earnestness. Her surroundings, like herself, are plain and homely. She lives on the first floor of the double apartment house at No. 335 East Eighty-fifth street. It is this property and a \$10,000 mortgage on a other apartment house on East Seventy-seventh street that she made over to the Park Avenue Church.

The little parlor where she receives her visitors is furnished with straight-backed chairs upholstered in some flowered material. On the walls are half a dozen or more prints, chiefly of religious subjects. The mantel is covered with a few ordinary ornaments, and for the rest is hidden almost under an accumulation of photographs. They are mostly of women and children, and constitute her chief delight.

"They are my tenants," she explains, "and they were given me because the people are fond of me. Ay, I say it without vanity; they are fond of me. Never in all the years that I have had this property have I had trouble with my tenants. They always paid me, I am sure, when they could. When they could not, I never pressed them. Why should I? People are good on the whole, sir. There are those who say otherwise, I know, but it is not true. I am an old woman and have seen much of the world, and I tell you the people here are of good heart and upright soul. There is much trouble and much poverty and a great deal of suffering, but for the most part it is due not to the people who suffer, but to circumstances."

"When I could I have tried to help my neighbors. Protestant, Catholic and Jew, it has been all one to me. Jesus himself knew no distinction, and by God's grace I have known none. And my reward has been great. I count my friends by the hundreds among the poor and lowly."

"And the rich, too, I have found great and noble minded here. For many years I served with Mrs. William H. Vanderbilt, with Mrs. Roosevelt and with Mrs. Anson Phelps Stokes, and the grand, unselfish deeds I have known these ladies to do, day after day, year after year, would move any heart. Those who cry the rich down do it through ignorance. These ladies did good almost every hour, but none knew of it except I and a few others. They kept their noble deeds hidden. Their right hand was not permitted to know what the left was doing, as the good Book commands."



JANE JONES.

The old lady's face was reverent almost, with admiration. Then her eyes burned with the fire of reproach as she demanded: "Why, then, should I be made much of for the little I have done with the property that was intrusted to me? No, I say, it was not right. Beside these good ladies my action is of no account, and I want none of the praise that for some reason has been showered upon me. God has been very good to me. I have been very happy all my days, and I am thankful for the privilege He has given me of doing some little thing in His name. I live my sister and I dreamed of this thing. Many a time we talked it over and made our plans by which we were to return to the good Lord in a measure the blessings we were given to enjoy."

## The Story of Her Renunciation by the Rev. Albert Her Pastor.

THE story of the legacy of Miss Jane Jones to the city, is most interesting because of its simplicity, easily repeated in so many families if they were and faithfulness in gaining, the same temperance and e has said if the workmen of this country were to put they put into saloons for ten years the same hard-work railroad in this country. Besides this, they would have and happy homes.

The story of the Jones sister is simply a story of a putting it away in savings and then buying a estate until their savings as servant girls became thow in the mountain district of Wales, their father working healthy plenty, the father and mother being Wesleyans dist preacher. Every remembrance of Jane's early life prayers and plenty. There was not much variety on the plainest meal without thanksgiving, and the child that every good thing came from God. In this way t God became a part of her life. She was brought up and, being strong and healthy, could do as much as a many a day in harvest time, when she worked from e Her home and church were the two sacred places.

The mother died when Jane was a little girl, and about eighteen. Her older brother, James, came first American girl, who brought up her family independent girls who were working for a living. Two came to America. Mary seems to have been the family, and did the business. Lewis was the unfather the last years of his life, and the receipt book shows years before his death from these two sisters, Mary a

Mary died of cancer about three years ago, and Jane savings. When Jane came to this country she could But her bright, honest face, her cheerful, willing and she got \$6 a month. She was strong and willing, a vant, and within a few years she got her \$60 a month son Phelps and James Roosevelt. She was worthy of work and keep the other servants in order. She members of the family in their new homes, and the She only needed the word as to whether it was to be and how many guests, and the lady of the house to that splendid class of former-time house

The sisters kept up their religious at the church until they came to own their Mary and Jane joined the Cornet Memorial under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Well property in Eighty-fifth street, Jane re she is now a member. She is a ship, but beyond that and her liber church work. At the time of Mar church possess her property, and J she should suggest the idea of mal death. Dr. F. C. Iglehart, who at thing possible for her that a past position, as he could easily have d this city, giving all her property to the

The present pastor of the church was a ing the desire to transfer her property at or back enough to meet her plain and simple the thoughts of years. She gave as her rea time; that the house kept her tied up so friends, and she felt more and more a des two weeks at Ocean Grove and she was so

But the pastor naturally would not her assure to her the net income of the proper would not accept it on any other conditio of the city, Townsend Wendell, Esq., wa pers, to make the searches and at the san obligates itself to place this property in who shall care for it and turn over the the property every six months. Mr. G this place, and was appointed to it by it

On Monday, March 22, the various pr papers were duly signed and no one th the realization of her hopes and pray she went back to her former home. a magnificent gift to the church. T Jones's welfare during her life, and i It is the thought of Miss Jones to t soon as possible turn over her prop

Miss Jones is over fifty-eight, an many years to enjoy the benefit any claim upon the property. It lift many a burden from the go many men have been willing to tal to take her at the same time. Bu

If one were to ask her what ha be shorter than Ian MacLaren's an of the fatherless, in the protection joy of saving for God, and in the loan to be returned." No increase she is only proud of the fact that may find some good lessons from dren by bestowing on the church and work up as he has done.